

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EUR-12 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 IO-13 /078 W
-----075285 282206Z /12

O 281905Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1537

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 3647

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: PRETORIA FIVE MEETING WITH BOHTA JUNE 28

THE PRETORIA FIVE MT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA ON
JUNE 28. FOLLOWING IS OUR AGREED REPORT:

QUOTE: 1. AFTER TWO UNEXPLAINED DELAYS, THE PRETORIA
FIVE WERE SUMMONED TO MEET FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA AT 1400
HOURS LOCAL TIME ON 28 JUNE. ON OUR ARRIVAL FOURIE GAVE
US THE TEXT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S RESPONSE TO THE APPROACH MADE
ON 22 JUNE. WE TOOK TEN MINUTES TO READ IT BEFORE THE
START OF THE MEETING, WHICH LASTED ABOUT AN HOUR.
(TEXT OF RESPONSE IN PRTORIA 3646)

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2. WE WXPLAINED THAT WHILE OUR RESPONSE COULD ONLY BE A
PRELIMINARY ONE, WE WERE CONCERNED IN PARTICULAR BY THE
SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT'S STATEMENT IN PARAGRAPH 12
THAT THE SUGGESTION WE HAD PUT TO THM WOULD "AMOUNT
TO A SUBSTANTIAL AMENDMENT OF THE PROPOSAL". WE DID
NOT REGARD OUR SUGGESTION AS A CHANGE, BUT IF THEY

MAINTAINED THAT IT WAS A CHANGE, THEN WE WOULD HAVE TO REGARD THEIR REPLY AS A REJECTION OF WHAT WE HAD INTENDED AS A HELPFUL SUGGESTION. WE REGARDED OUR SUGGESTION AS COMING FIRMLY WITHIN THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL, EVEN THOUGH WE ACCEPTED THAT IT LIMITED THE OPTIONS. WE WERE VERY DISAPPOINTED THAT THEY WERE NOT ABLE TO SHOW MORE FLEXIBILITY. THE ASSUMPTION UNDERLYING OUR SUGGESTION OF THE GROOTFONTEIN OPTION WAS THE REDUCTION OF FORCES WOULD ONLY TAKE PLACE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF VISIBLE PEACE ON THE GROUND.

3. BOTHA ARGUED THAT TO BE USEFUL TO THE WESTERN FIVE, THE SAG'S AGREEMENT TO OUR SUGGESTION WOULD HAVE TO BE DESCRIBED TO SWAPO AS A CONCESSION OR AN ALTERATION OF THE PROPOSAL. THIS WOULD CAUSE PRESSURES WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA FOR COUNTER CONCESSIONS FROM SWAPO. THE SLIGHTEST CHANGE IN THE WESTERN PROPOSAL WOULD OPEN THE WAY TO REQUESTS FOR CHANGES ON THE OTHER SIDE. HE ARGUED THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAD WITHDRAWN

MOST RELUCTANTLY ITS DEMAND TO HAVE TROOPS IN THE NINE BORDER POINTS. THE SA BASES WERE REDUCED TO TWO IN THE PROPOSAL AND THEY WERE NOW BEING ASKED TO REDUCE TO ONLY ONE. IN FACT THIS WOULD AMOUNT TO A TOTAL WITHDRAWAL FROM OVAMBOLAND. OSHIVELLO, HE NOTED, IS IN THE MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTHERN PART OF OVAMBOLAND AND IS NOT POPULATED BY ANYONE THE SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS COULD INTIMIDATE. WITHDRAWAL TO GROOTFONTEIN WOULD GREATLY INCREASE THE TIME NEEDED TO MEET ANY SUDDEN THREAT IN OVAMBOLAND. WE RESPONDED THAT THE WITHDRAWAL TO ONE BASE WOULD COME ONLY AFTER 12 WEEKS OF SUCCESSIVE REDUCTIONS AND WOULD BE TIED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PEACE ON BOTH SIDES.

4. BOTHA ASKED WHETHER THE AMBASSADORS WOULD BE PREPARED TO PUT TO THEIR GOVERNMENTS A PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE RESIDUAL FORCE TO 3000 IF HE IN TURN WERE PREPARED TO TAKE OUR SUGGESTION BACK AGAIN TO THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE. WE RESPONDED THAT THIS WOULD BE A BASIC CHANGE IN THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY OPEN THE WAY TO SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER CHANGE FROM THE OTHER SIDE. THIS WE COULD NOT SUPPORT.

5. AT THIS POINT WE SAID THAT IN MAKING OUR PROPOSAL TO THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT ON 22 JUNE, WE RECOGNIZED THAT WE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT SWAPO WOULD REGARD ACCEPTANCE OF OUR SUGGESTION AS FULLY MEETING THEIR POINT. AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE APPROACH, IT MIGHT

BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO MAKE THIS SUGGESTION TO THE OTHER
SIDE TO TEST THEIR REACTION. IF SWAPO INDICATED THAT
THIS WOULD MEET THEIR POINT, WOULD THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT BE PREPARED TO CONTEMPLATE LIMITING THEIR
TROOPS TO GROOTFONTEIN?

6. BOTHA REACTED NEGATIVELY. THE SOUTH AFRICAN
GOVERNMENT COULD CONTEMPLATE NO CHANGE OR VARIATION IN
THE PROPOSAL WITHOUT A GUID PRO QUO. HE THOUGH THAT
HE HAD DONE HIS SHARE GETTING HIS COLLEAGUES TO COME AS
FAR AS THEY HAD, AND HE COULD NOT GO BACK TO THE PRIME
MINISTER. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE FIVE SHOULD FEEL THEMSELVES
FREE TO PRESENT THEIR CASE TO THE PRIME MINISTER IF THEY SO
WISHED AND HE WOULD GLADLY TRY TO ARRANGE AN APPOINTMENT.
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OUR IMPRESSION, HOWEVER, WAS THAT THIS WOULD BE OF LITTLE
USE WITHOUT SOME NEW ELEMENT. WE SAID THAT IT MIGHT
INDEED BE NECESSARY TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER AT SOME
LATE DATE BUT THAT WE WERE NOT YET IN A POSITION
TO SEEK AN APPOINTMENT. BOTHA MADE CLEAR THAT THE
PRIME MINISTER WOULD IN ANY CASE NOT BE AVAILABLE
UNTIL 3 JULY.

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ACTION AF-10

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NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 /078 W
-----074064 282033Z /12

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7. BOTHA, WHO WAS IN A BUSINESSLIKE AND UNEMOTIONAL MOOD THROUGHOUT THE INTERVIEW, EMPHASIZED THAT HE RECOGNIZED THAT BOTH HE AND THE FIVE WISHED TO ASSIST ONE ANOTHER. BUT THERE WERE LIMITS BEYOND WHICH THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FOUND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO GO, BUT IF WE COULD WIN SWAPO'S ACCEPTANCE, THE SAG WOULD GO AHEAD WITH THE ORIGINAL PROPOSAL.

8. COMMENT: WE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT BOTH BOTHA AND FOURIE WERE SINCERE IN STATING THAT THEY COULD NOT GO BACK TO THE PRIME MINISTER ON THIS MATTER WITHOUT SOMETHING NEW FROM THE FIVE. ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT WE ALL AGREE THAT IT IS OUT OF THE QUESTION TO MODIFY THE PROPOSAL AS IT STANDS, THE OPTIONS FOR FUTURE PRO-
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GRESS SEEM TO BE EXTREMELY LIMITED. ONE POSSIBILITY MIGHT BE TO APPROACH SWAPO TO SEE IF THEY WOULD ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL ON THE CONDITION THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD MAINTAIN ITS RESIDUAL FORCE ONLY AT GROOTFONTEIN. THIS IDEA WOULD BE STRENGTHENED IF WE COULD GET SWAPO AND THE SOUTH AFRICANS TO AGREE NOT TO INITIATE MILITARY ACTION OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE THUS CREATING A BETTER ATMOSPHERE FOR ACCEPTANCE OF THE GROOTFONTEIN OPTION. IN OUTLINING THIS POSSIBILITY TO SWAPO WE COULD SAY THAT WE HAVE NO ASSURANCE THAT SOUTH AFRICA WOULD ACCEPT IT BUT BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD GIVE US GREATER LEVERAGE TO ACHIEVE AND ENFORCEABLE AGREEMENT. IN SHORT, IF WE ARE TO TAKE THE SOUTH AFRICANS ANY FURTHER WE MUST GIVE THEM SOME INDICATION THAT SWAPO WILL ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR CURRENT SUGGESTION.

9. WE DID NOT DISCUSS WALVIS BAY. WE EMPHASIZED, HOWEVER, THAT OUR RESPONSE WAS ONLY A PRELIMINARY ONE AND WE SHOULD BE SEEKING INSTRUCTIONS FROM OUR GOVERNMENTS BASED ON FURTHER STUDY OF THE PAPER.
END QUOTE.
EDMONDSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MEETING REPORTS, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978PRETOR03647
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: DC ALTERED PER 78 PRETORIA 3691
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780268-0263
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780611/aaaaajrh.tel
Line Count: 220
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b3bfc97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2172673
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA: PRETORIA FIVE MEETING WITH BOHTA JUNE 28 THE PRETORIA FIVE MT WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOTHA ON JUNE 28.
FOLLOWING IS OUR AGREED REPORT
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA, (BOTHA, PIK)
To: STATE USUN NEW YORK
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b3bfc97d-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014